

than most other investments due to poor assessment practices and regressive taxes. Unimproved and underimproved land is taxed so lightly that owners hold the land until they can secure absurd prices for it while paying almost nothing in taxes on it. In addition, improvements are taxed, making slums a highly profitable investment while ignoring a potential source of tax revenue.

It would be naive to expect action on all the proposals recommended in this and other county reports, or to suppose that everyone who reads these criticisms of local government will agree with the Board's statements regarding them. There exists in all of us a reluctance to change, and we sometimes have a stake in the status quo. But the problems are pressing, and the people are going to listen and rethink the old ways. It is possible that the joint efforts of business, labor, civic, and other groups will initiate discussions and reforms in order to face the weighty challenges of the day. Local governments can become as efficient as any centralized organization yet devised, and offer a more democratic style in the process. Some readjustments are, however, first in order, and by making them, Union County will lead the way.